

Breaking of temples during Muslim Rule of India

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Below are a list of instances of Hindu Temples broken during the Long and disastrous Muslim rule over India. Most of these are extracted from various books written by prominent british writers during the British rule of India before 1947. Each of these accounts are presented with the relevant extract from the book.

1. From Page 28 of "HISTORY OF INDIA" by JOHN CLARK MARSHMAN, 1873 – "He (Altumsh) captured Oojein (Ujjain), the venerable capital of Vikramadityu and destroyed his magnificent temple of Muhakal, and sent the images to Delhi to be mutilated and placed as steps of his great mosque".

Kootub was succeeded by his son Aram, who was de-throned within a year, and Altumsh, his slave and son-in-law, was raised to supreme authority, which he enjoyed for twenty-five years. He was occupied in reducing to subjection the few districts which still remained in the hands of the Hindoos, in curbing his subordinate governors, and consolidating the new empire. He reduced the strong fortresses of Rinkthimbore in Rajpootana, of Gwalior, and of Mandoo. He captured Oojein, the venerable capital of Vikrum-adityu, and destroyed his magnificent temple of Muhakal, and sent the images to Delhi to be mutilated and placed as steps of his great mosque. He was succeeded by his son, who was deposed within six months for his vices, and his sister Rezia was raised to the throne. "She was," says the historian, "endowed with every princely virtue, and those who scrutinised her actions most severely could find in her

2. From Page 38 of "HISTORY OF INDIA" by JOHN CLARK MARSHMAN, 1873 --

"Seunder Lodhi's reign) was marked by the oppression of the Hindoos, whose pilgrimages he prohibited, and whose temples he demolished in every direction, erecting mosquos with the materials,"

but they came to a final issue in 1478, when the last of the "kings of the east," as the dynasty was termed, fled to Bengal, and the kingdom was reannexed to the dominions of Delhi. Beloli Lodi succeeded in extending the territories of the crown from the Jumna to the Himalaya, and from the Indus to Benares; and after a reign of thirty-eight years bequeathed the throne to his son Secunder, who added Behar to his conquests. But his administration, though otherwise just and equitable, was marked by the oppression of the Hindoos, whose pilgrimages he prohibited, and whose temples he demolished in every direction, erecting mosques with the materials. In 1517, Ibrahim, the third and the last of the line, succeeded to the crown, and alienated his nobles by his arrogance and

3. From "HISTORY OF INDIA" book by JOHN CLARK MARSHMAN, 1873. Describing how Aurangzeb destroyed temples in Banaras and used the idols as stairs of the mosques.

power of the empire. Aurungzebe ordered that no Hindoos should in future be employed in the public service, and 1677 he reimposed the odious poll-tax, the jezzia, on infidels. His measures, however disguised, breathed the spirit of intolerance. The Hindoo temples in Bengal, and even in the holy city of Benares, were demolished, and mosques erected on the sites, and the images used as steps. These bigoted proceedings produced a feeling of disaffection in Revolt of the every province, but it was only in Rajpootana Rajpoots. that they created political disturbance. Jeswunt Sing, the faithful Rajpoot general of the emperor, had died in Cabul, and as his widow and family passed through 1677 Delhi, Aurungzebe surrounded their encampment with ~~intending to detain them as hostages~~. They were

4. An account of Bengal general 'Kala Pahad' demolishing hindu temples and idols in #Odisha in 1558. From Page 112 of 'History of Orissa' book by Andrew Sterling, 1846

All the native writers agree in speaking with horror of the cruel excesses committed by their Afghan conqueror, and the wide destruction of images and temples occasioned by his unrelenting persecution of the Hindu faith. Many demolished idols seen at various temples demonstrate the devastation caused by these invasions. Their conquerors gloried in the destruction of idols, and even made them stepping-stones to their mosques.

The adventures of the great Idol from a curious episode in the history of this period. According to the Mandala Panji, when the priests at Pooree saw the turn which matters were taking, *they again for the third time in their annals, hurried away the helpless god in a covered cart, and buried him in a pit at Parikud, on the Chilka Lake.* Kalapahar

5. Atrocities on Hindus by Tipu Sultan from the book 'Haidar Ali And Tipu Sultan' by Lewin Bowring, 1893. Detailing how #tipusultan destroyed temples in Malabar and Travancore.

patam. They reluctantly acquiesced in the former alternative, knowing well what the deportation meant. The next day, accordingly, all the males were circumcised, while both sexes were compelled to eat beef, as a proof of their conversion. One of the principal victims of Tipu's revenge was the Raja of Chirakkal¹, of ancient descent, who having been falsely accused of conspiring, was attacked and killed, and his body hung up after his death. In this raid the Mysore sovereign is said to have carried off large treasures plundered from the temples in Malabar. He crowned his achievements by compelling the princess of Cannanore to marry her daughter to his son, Abd-ul-Khalik.

Sepoys, which had been despatched from Bombay to the same place. But the vacillation of the Madras Government, and want of enterprise on the part of the commanding officers themselves, prevented their co-operating with the Travancore troops in the defence.

The Mysore army, flushed with success, now began to lay waste the country with fire and sword, desecrating and despoiling temples, and burning towns and villages, whose wretched inhabitants fled to the hills, where many were seized and made prisoners. The ruins to be seen at the present day testify to the ferocity of the invaders, while all the records of

6. Tipu's atrocities in shrirangpatnam. Page 62 From the book 'Captives Of Tipu Survivors Narratives' by Lawrence A W, 1929.

our admiration changes into merited detestation.

It is his constant and favourite practice to insult and persecute the Hindoos on the score of religion: he has demolished many of their temples and sanctified places of worship, particularly a much-revered pagoda near the bazaar of Seringapatam, where he found, it is asserted, 150,000 coined pagodas, buried under the stone out of which the oval was hewn. He frequently orders calves to be brought before the doors of their temples, and sheds the sacred blood under the very nose of the offended deity.

7. Account of mosque constructed on top of a temple from Jajpur in #Odisha. From "Orissa: Its Geography, Statistics, History, Religion and Antiquities" by Andrew Sterling, 1846, Page 137

cover no ground whatever for such a territorial division. Mohammed Taki Khan, the Deputy of Shuja Khan Nazir of Bengal, held his Court at Jajipur, and built a fine palace and mosque on the banks of the Byterini, early in the last century, out of the materials of some dilapidated Hindu temple, the sculptured ornaments of which may be still observed in many parts of the walls.

8. AN example from #Odisha, "He pulled down the shrine and ordered the image of god Krishna to be broken into fragments and cast into gutter." From: 'HISTORY OF THE JAGANNATH TEMPLE', 1958, A.N. Dwivedi

Niamat-ullah describes the desecration of the Jagannath temple with zest. "He (Sulaiman) turned his attention towards its (Jagannath temple's) destruction and marched with a corps of troops. He pulled down the shrine and ordered the image of god Krishna which was decorated in elegant and beautiful way and whose limbs were made of red gold, pair of eyes formed of Badakshani ruby, to be broken into

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fragments and cast into gutter. Seven other gold images of various shape lying near and around the town each of which weighed five maunds, according to the Akbari standard of weight, were plucked out.

9. Destruction of #NalandaUniversity from the book 'University of Nalanda' by Hasmukh Sankalia, 1934, Page 124

pandits were witnesses,—the famous Universities were razed to the ground, monks slain, and the vast and gigantic libraries burnt by the Moslems.

Pandits of Nālandā were famous all over India for their knowledge. Countless pandits of different faiths had to go away out of the place.

10. account of destruction of #NalandaUniversity from the book 'University of Nalanda' by Hasmukh Sankalia, 1934, Page 207

The Moslem chronicler tells us that the onslaught of Bakhtiyār Khilji was so severe and so thorough that the monks (Brāhmaṇs with shaven heads) were killed, one and all, so much so, that there was no one left to explain the contents of books that the victor found at the place.¹

(1) See *Tabakat-I Nasiri*, Elliot, *History of India*, II, p. 306.

11. Terrorism in medieval era by Mahmud of Gazni on Somnath Temple. From 'History Of India' book By H. M, Elliot, 1869, Page 524.

It happened that Mahmúd had long been planning an expedition into Bhardána, and Gujerat, to destroy the idol temple of Somnát, a place of great sanctity to all Hindus. So as soon as he had returned to Ghazní from his Khurásán business, he issued a farmán to the General of the army, ordering him to leave a confidential officer in charge of the fort of Kábulsz, and himself to join the court with his son Sálár Mas'úd. Accordingly, they presented themselves before the Sultán, who received them with special marks of favour, and showed such great kindness to Mas'úd that his wazír became jealous.

Afterwards he invited Sálár Sáhú to a private audience, and asked his advice about leading an army against Somnát. "Through the favour of Allah," said that officer, "the power and grandeur of your Majesty have struck such terror into the hearts of the unbelievers, that not one of them has the daring to oppose you. The best plan is at once to commence the enterprise." This advice

12. Another account of creation of mosque on top of destroyed temple by Jahangir.

From 'Memoirs Of The Emperor Jahangueir Vol II' by Price Major David, Page 25

I employed a confidential person to ascertain the truth ; and, as I justly supposed, the whole was detected to be an impudent imposture. Of this discovery I availed myself, and I made it my plea for throwing down the temple which was the scene of this imposture ; and on the spot, with the very same materials, I erected the great mosque, because the very name of Isslâm was proscribed at Banaras, and with God's blessing it is my design, if I live, to fill it full with true believers.

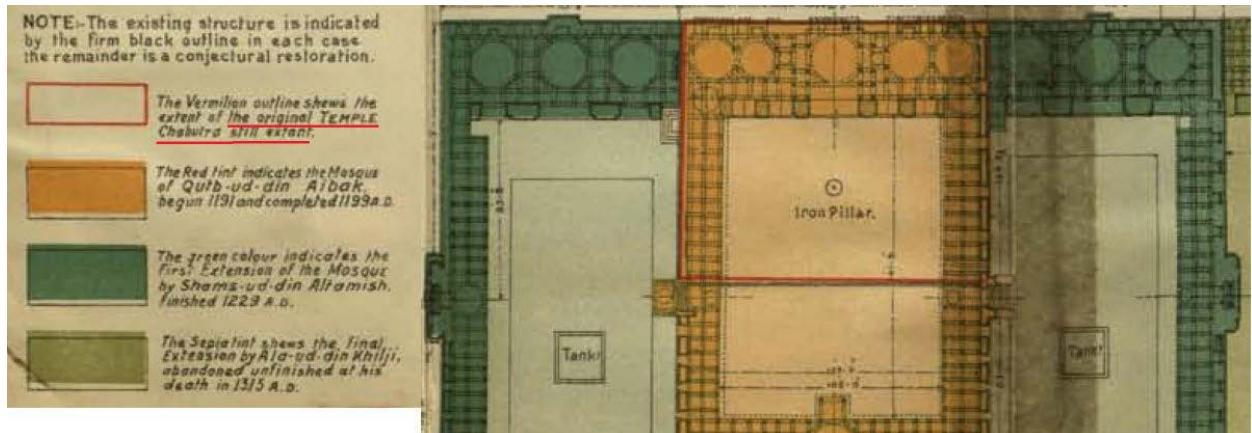
13. Another evidence of Qutub Minar built on a Temple. From 'Seven cities of Delhi' book by Gordon Hearn, 1938, Page 25.

A. Cunningham, contended that the minar really had a Hindu origin, declaring that only Hindus, with their proficiency in mathematics, could have designed such a structure; he sought to confirm his theory by working out a series of measurements, to which indeed many of the measurements of the minar conform rather closely. Moreover, the base of the minar is at the level of the foundations of the Hindu temple which was afterwards altered into a mosque. Some of the moulded bands of stone round the minar have been deeply cut, which Mr. Beglar suggests was done after erasing some original carvings to which the Mahomedans ob-

14. Another account of Aurangzeb converting a Temple in Ahmedabad to mosque. From 'India In The Seventeenth Century' book by J. Ovington, 1689, Page 17

Ahmedabad being inhabited also by a great number of heathens, there are pagodas, or idol-temples in it. That which was called the pagoda of Santidas was the chief, before Aurangzeb converted it into a mosque. When he performed that ceremony, he caused a cow to be killed in the place, knowing very well, that after such an action, the gentiles according to their law, could worship no more therein. All round the temple there is a cloister furnished with lovely cells, beautified with figures of marble in relief, representing naked women sitting after the Oriental fashion. The inside roof of the mosque is pretty enough, and the walls are full of the figures of men and beasts; but Aurangzeb, who hath always made a show of an affected devotion, which at length raised him to the throne, caused the noses of all these figures which added a great deal of magnificence to that mosque, to be beat off.

15. Temple existence under Qutub Minar, Delhi. Details From 'Guide to the Qutab Delhi' book by J.A. Page, 1927, Plate I, Page 66.



From same book, Page 64

PLATE XI.



(a) OBVERSE OF HINDU SCULPTURED STONES, THE REVERSE
OF WHICH IS INSCRIBED WITH NASKH LETTERING (ISLAMIC).



(b) REVERSE OF (a), SHOWING THE NASKH LETTERING.

16. Evidence of Jama Masjid of Delhi built on a Temple. From 'Archaeology and monumental remains of Delhi' by Corr Stephen, 1876, Page 40

grandeur of this temple with its rows of cloisters, three and four deep, surrounded by other buildings both lofty and roomy.

Immediately after the conquest of Delhi by Qutb-uddin Aibek, the favorite lieutenant of Muhammad Ghori, he commenced building this mosque on the site of Rai Pithora's temple which he had previously demolished. According to Muhammadan historians who are followed by some European authorities, Aibek is said to have pulled down only the western wall of the temple, where he built a mosque, and allowed the rest of the temple to stand as it was. But General Cunningham conclusively establishes the facts that the superstructure of the temple was pulled down, with the exception of a few pillars to which reference shall be made later; that the Masjid stands on the raised terrace or platform of the temple which also marks its site, and that the lower portion of the surrounding walls of this platform was the original undisturbed work of the Hindus. The destruction of the Hindu temples was so complete, that in the reign of Shams-uddin Altamsh, practically the successor of Aibek, "not a vestige of them was to be seen."*

17. Fragments from Somnath temple's idol placed on Jama Masjid's stairs by Khilji.

From 'Archaeology and monumental remains of Delhi' by Corr Stephen, 1876, Page

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68 HAUZ SHAMSI, OR THE TANK OF SHAMS-UDDIN ALTAMSH.

by elephants." In the front of this mosque, Shams-uddin Altamsh placed, "in an ignominious position," the statue of Vikramaditya, which he had brought from the temple of Mahakal; and later still 'Ala-uddin Khilji "paved the entrance of the Jam'a Masjid with fragments of the idol of Somnat for which he had refused a thousand pieces of gold."*

18. In the northern side of the Banaras (varanasi) city there are several Muhammadan mosques which have been built out of the remains of temples. From 'Benares, the sacred city' book by E. B. Havell, 1905, Page 202

especially sacred by any sect of Hindus. In the northern side of the city there are several Muhammadan mosques which have been built out of the remains of old Jain, Buddhist, or Brahminical temples or monasteries. The most interesting and picturesque of these is opposite to Kāsi railway-station. The Muhammadans, in converting it to their own use about one hundred and twenty years ago, gave it a symmetry suggestive of a Greek or Roman temple.

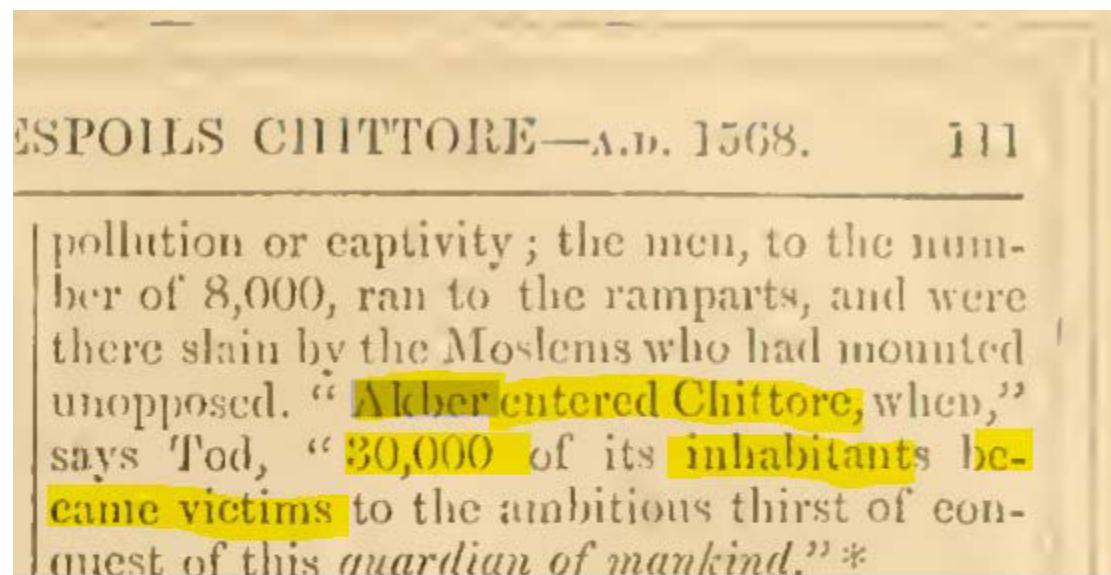
19. An account of Mahmood Gazni destroying Idol of Somnath Temple.

From 'The History Of The Indian Empire - Volume I' book by R. Montgomery Martin, 1860, Page 67

cated fact that Mahmood was entreated by a crowd of Brahmins to accept a costly ransom and spare the object of their veneration, but after some hesitation, he exclaimed that were he to consent, his name would go down to posterity as an idol-seller instead of destroyer, he therefore struck the face of the image with his mace, and his example being followed by his companions, the figure,

20. Akbar Plundering Temple of Chittor after his conquest. From 'The History Of The Indian Empire - Volume I' book by R. Montgomery Martin, 1860, Page 111

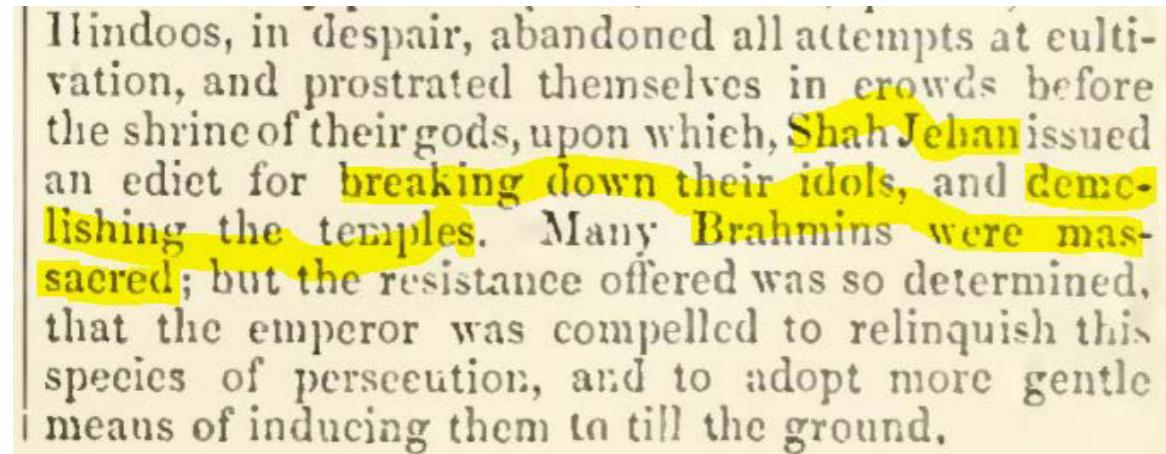
<https://archive.org/details/TheHistoryOfTheIndianEmpire-Volumel/page/110/mode/2up>



* Akber's conduct on this occasion has also left an indelible stain on his character as a patron of the arts, for the stately temples and palaces of Chittore were defaced and despoiled with the most ruthless barbarity. He showed, however, his sense of the

21. Shah Jahan Destroying Temples and Killing Brahmins. From 'The History Of The Indian Empire - Volume I' book by R. Montgomery Martin, 1860, Page 129

<https://archive.org/details/TheHistoryOfTheIndianEmpire-Volumel/page/128/mode/2up>



22. Murshed Kuli Khan of Murshidabad destroying temples. From 'The History Of The Indian Empire - Volume I' book by R. Montgomery Martin, 1860, Page 240

<https://archive.org/details/TheHistoryOfTheIndianEmpire-Volumel/page/240/mode/2up>

ligious offering.—(Stewart's *Bengal*, pp. 378—411; and *Sketches of Bengal*—anonymous.) As a climax to his oppressions in the eyes of the Hindoos, and laudable zeal in those of his fellow-believers, the viceroy, in his old age, caused all the Brahminical temples in Moorshedabad to be pulled down to furnish materials for his tomb.

* Other minarets of less importance than those